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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 001302

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, S/CT, S/WCI

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: MINSTATE ABDUL GHAFFAR DISCUSSES COUNTER-TERRORISM
LAW, LEGAL CASE OF GITMO DETAINEES

Classified by Charge D'Affaires Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) This is an action request; please see paragraph 8.

Summary

2. (C) The Charge met with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammed Abdul Ghaffar to discuss the status of Bahrain's counter-terrorism law, recent press articles on legal cases concerning detainees at Guantanamo, and other issues (septels). Abdul Ghaffar said that he could not pass us a copy of the draft CT law because it was still under review by the cabinet. He said it was modeled on UN and other international CT conventions. He noted that the cabinet had not yet decided whether the law would be presented to parliament as a stand-alone bill or as an amendment to the existing criminal code. The Charge emphasized that the United States would continue to work closely with Bahrain to combat local, regional, and transnational threats to Bahrain's security. Regarding Guantanamo, Abdul Ghaffar noted that British lawyers had received permission from the U.S. Supreme Court to visit their (British) clients, and the attorneys representing the Bahraini detainees reportedly planned to seek similar authorization. End Summary.

CT Law Still With Cabinet

3. (C) The Charge opened her August 18 meeting with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Abdul Ghaffar by asking about the Minister's recent visit to Washington, noting that he had offered to deliver a copy of the draft Bahraini counter-terrorism law to us during his meeting with S/CT Ambassador Black. Abdul Ghaffar said that he had a very productive visit to Washington, and felt that the United States and Bahrain were working closely together to identify CT issues and share information. He said that we were facing the challenge of terrorism together.

4. (C) Regarding the law, Abdul Ghaffar stated that it was still with the cabinet, and he was unable to give us a copy until the cabinet had received input and approval from the relevant ministries. He assured the Charge that the United States would be happy with the law, saying it was based upon UN and other international CT conventions, such as the Arab and GCC agreements on combating terrorism. He said the cabinet was still unsure whether it would propose the law as a stand-alone bill or as an amendment to the existing criminal code. He noted that gaining parliamentary approval for the law would be sensitive, and that the GOB was preparing the ground by stressing that a world-class CT law was in Bahrain's national interest, and that any shortcomings would be harmful to Bahrain's future.

Continued Vigilance Combating Terrorism

5. (C) The Charge pointed out that terrorist threats can emanate from local, regional, and transnational sources. She said that the United States and countries in the region had suffered greatly from terrorism, and the United States, like the government of Bahrain, wants to be certain that Bahrain does not suffer from this scourge. She pledged our support, cooperation and assistance to ensure that the GOB is on top of any challenges to the country's security. Abdul Ghaffar responded that Bahrain would remain vigilant and continue to cooperate with the U.S. and other friendly countries on CT initiatives. He assured the Charge that there was no daylight between the positions of the GOB and the United States on combating terrorism. The Charge noted that a strong CT law would enable the GOB to take firm action against any elements seeking to disrupt the security situation in the country and maintain rule of law.

Attorney Access to Gitmo Detainees?

16. (C) Abdul Ghaffar related that he had read an article in the August 18 edition of Al-Wasat newspaper reporting that British lawyers had obtained U.S. Supreme Court authorization to meet with their (British) clients, detainees at Guantanamo. The article continued that attorneys from the firm Dorsey and Whitney, who represent Bahraini detainees, would be requesting similar authorization over the next few days. Abdul Ghaffar indicated that he would undoubtedly be asked to follow up on this, and he requested an update from us so that he could accurately portray the current state-of-play.

17. (C) Action Request: Embassy requests information that we can share with Abdul Ghaffar on the status of legal cases concerning attorney access to Gitmo detainees.

Comment

18. (C) Abdul Ghaffar clearly understands that both the United States and Bahrain have a strong national interest in maintaining a stable security environment in Bahrain. In recognition of political reality, he is keeping one eye on the legislative hurdles the GOB will face when it presents the law to parliament for passage. The timing and form of the law as it is presented to parliament, and the government's efforts to gain passage, will bear watching as the GOB moves to get on top of the domestic security situation. We will continue to seek a copy of the draft law.
End Comment.

ZIADEH